
China's first home produced commercial airliner has flown for the first time. The 90 seat ARJ-21 made a maiden test flight from an airport in the Shanghai region. This report is from the BBC's Business Correspondent Mark Gregory:

China has **ambitious plans** to develop **civil aircraft manufacturing**. Eventually the aim is to challenge Boeing and Airbus, the **dominant** Western plane makers. The first step is a small regional jet - the ARJ-21, also known as the Flying Phoenix - designed to take 90 passengers on short and medium length journeys.

It's the first Chinese designed and manufactured commercial **jet**. And **in a little piece of history** it's now made its **maiden** test flight from an airport near Shanghai. Chinese media reports said the flight went extremely well, although for safety reasons the aircraft wasn't allowed to fly more than 900 meters, about 3,000 feet, above the ground.

It's due to go into service within 18 months. The main market will be Chinese airlines operating routes within China, but earlier this month the plane got its first foreign order. The American industrial giant General Electric is buying five of the jets for its aircraft leasing **arm**, with an option to buy 20 more later.

Friday's test flight took place more than six months later than originally planned after reports of problems with components provided by **outside suppliers**.

Mark Gregory, BBC

Vocabulary and definitions

ambitious plans	desire and intentions to become very successful
civil aircraft manufacturing	the production of airplanes that will be used for carrying passengers
Eventually the aim is	here, China's long-term goal/objective is; in the future China would like
dominant	here, that are used more widely than others
jet	a powerful airplane which has engines that allow it to travel very fast covering long distances
in a little piece of history	doing something that will be remembered for a long time
maiden	first ever
It's due to go into service	the plan is that it will start carrying passengers on regular flights
arm	here, a (commercial) division, sub-organisation or department
outside suppliers	here, companies other than the main manufacturer which produce and deliver parts that are used to build planes

More on this story:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2007/12/071221_china_jet.shtml

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/11/081128_china_plane.shtml